

I CLAIM:

1. A magnetic hinge defining a hinge axis, comprising:
 - a. a first hinge plate of non-magnetic material;
 - b. at least one first magnet disposed in said first plate
 - 5 adjacent the hinge axis for movement therewith;
 - c. a second hinge plate of non-magnetic material; and
 - d. at least one second magnet disposed in said second plate adjacent the hinge axis for movement therewith;

said first and second plates being movable about the

- 10 hinge axis between:
 - i. a closed orientation wherein said first and second plates are generally parallel and at least partially overlapping, and said first and second magnets are generally parallel, overlapping and in the same magnetic orientation, and
 - 15 ii. an open orientation wherein said first and second plates are generally parallel and at least partially non-overlapping, and said first and second magnets are generally parallel, non-overlapping and in
 - 20 opposite magnetic orientations, said first and second magnets being coplanar and aligned along a common axis.
- 2. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein said first plate and said at least one first magnet are readily manually separable from said second plate and
- 25 said at least one second magnet to deconstruct said hinge.
- 3. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein said first plate and said at least one first magnet are more readily manually separable from said second plate and said at least one second magnet to deconstruct said hinge when said plates are in the open orientation than when said plates are in the closed
- 30 orientation.

4. The hinge of Claim 2 wherein said first plate and said at least one first magnet are readily manually joinable with said second plate and said at least one second magnet to reconstitute said hinge.

5. The hinge of Claim 1 characterized by a lack of stability
5 when said plates are intermediate said closed and open orientations.

6. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein, in said open orientation, said first and second plates are disposed in a common plane, and said first and second magnets are closely adjacent in said common plane.

7. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein, in said closed orientation,
10 said first and second plates are disposed in two parallel planes, and said first and second magnets are closely adjacent and superposed in said two parallel planes.

8. A cosmetic case incorporating the hinge of Claim 1, one of said plates defining a base of said case, and the other of said plates defining a
15 cover of said case, said base and cover being movable between said closed and open orientations.

9. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein said first and second plates are pivotable about the hinge axis between said closed and open orientations.

10. The hinge of Claim 9 wherein the hinge axis is stationary
20 during pivoting of said plates.

11. The hinge of Claim 9 wherein the hinge axis is relocated during pivoting of said plates.

12. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge is devoid of a physical hinge pin.

25 13. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge is bistable.

14. The hinge of Claim 13 wherein the first and second magnets present a right angle adjacent the hinge axis.

15. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge is not bistable.

16. The hinge of Claim 15 wherein the first and second
30 magnets present a smooth curve adjacent the hinge axis.

17. The hinge of Claim 15 wherein the first and second magnets are elongated.

18. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and second plates incorporate means to preclude relative sliding movement thereof
5 parallel or transverse to the hinge axis.

19. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein said first and second magnets are non-circular.

20. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein said first and second magnets are elongated.

10 21. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein said first and second magnets are rectangular.

22. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge axis extends tangentially to the peripheries of said first and second plates in both said closed and open orientations.

15 23. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge axis extends intermediate the peripheries of said first and second plates in both said closed and open orientations.

24. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein, in both said open and closed orientations, said first and second magnets are in essentially immediate physical
20 contact.

25. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge pin is virtual.

26. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge axis does not increase the physical dimensions of said hinge.

27. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge axis does not
25 physically occupy space intermediate said plates.

28. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein the hinge axis neither increases the physical dimensions of said hinge nor physically occupies space intermediate said plates.

29. The hinge of Claim 1 wherein said first plate has disposed
30 therein at least a spaced apart pair of first magnets, and said second plate has

disposed therein at least a spaced apart pair of second magnets; each of said first magnets being generally parallel to and overlapping a respective one of said second magnets, and in the same magnetic orientation with respect thereto in said closed orientation, and each of said first magnets being generally parallel to
5 and non-overlapping a respective one of said second magnets and in aligned but opposite magnetic orientations with respect thereto in said open orientation.

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